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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY : East Germany

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INTRODUCTION

1. From January 1952 to July 1952 [redacted] at the Bergbau Ingenieurschule (Mining Engineering School) in Senftenberg, Nieder-Lausitz (near Kottbus). During this time [redacted] occasional excursions to the brown-coal (lignite) mines, which were above ground, in the surrounding Nieder-Lausitzer district. [redacted] never [redacted] any opportunity to gain information regarding the production or operating cost of these mines. [redacted] courses were solely concerned with the conventional type of surface mining machinery, its maintenance and operation (cranes, steam-shovels, pumps, etc.).

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MINING ENGINEERING SCHOOL IN SENFTENBERG

2. This mining trade school was exclusively for machinists and miners working in lignite surface mining. Similar schools existed

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in Zwickau (for soft-coal miners) and Eisleben (for ore miners). It took six semesters (three years) for the students to graduate. Two years of experience in mining (or the equivalent in studies) were required for admittance to the school. The overwhelming majority of students came from the Nieder-Lausitzer district lignite mines (Senftenberg, Mensechwitz, Bona, etc.). Graduates received a certificate from the school which entitled them to supervisory positions in their field. The theoretical courses encompassed all fields of lignite mining techniques (only surface mining) and machinery, and briquetting procedures.

LIGNITE MINE "FRANZ MEHRING" (FORMERLY "MARGA GRUBE")

3. I made several excursions in connection with my teaching duties to the lignite mine, "Franz Mehring", located between Senftenberg and Ruhland (Brieske). On these occasions I made the following observations.
4. The main equipment for the working of the vein consisted of two grab-bucket conveyors (Greiferbagger) for removal of the overburden. These excavators were steam-operated, caterpillar tracked, old models constructed by Orenstein & Koppel in Berlin or by the Luebecker Maschinenfabrik "Menk & Ambrock". (The Leuchhammerwerke and Krupp-Gruson in Magdeburg are other suppliers known to me.) Performance of such an excavator is one cubic meter in one working procedure of 3.5 minutes. Nine or ten bucket dredges (Eimer-Bagger) were used for working the lignite field, each bucket of 25 liters volume, operated at a cutting speed of 0.5 meters per second.
5. I heard that the total removing capacity was 35,000 cubic meters per day in this field. Difficulties were encountered through the occasional presence of limestone and rocks, which had to be removed by hand. I also heard that the utilization of bucket wheel excavators was planned, but that they were not yet available. Conveyor belts to the stock pile also did not exist. Removal was done by coal-handling cars (track gauge 900 mm.) with approximately 35 cubic meters capacity (27 tons), pulled by electrical locomotives (four cars at the time). It was planned to use cars of 50 tons capacity in the future. I observed that no reserve equipment was available and that repair on machinery was performed in nearby workshops.
6. Regarding the formation of the lignite field at this location, the total thickness of the deposit was about 5 m. from top to bottom in the following layers: 1 to 1.5 m. overburden (earth roof), 0.60 m. earthy brown-coal (Feuerkohle), 0.20 m. high-bituminous lignite coal (Schwelkohle), then 0.80 m. and 0.20 m., 0.90 m. and 0.25 m., 0.70 m. and 0.90 m. repeating the same sequence. Under the final lignite layer was pure clay. (I heard that at the "Grube Impuls", formerly Halle'sche Pfannschacht, also near Senftenberg, the thickness of the deposit was 8 m.)

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7. The lignite mined at "Franz Mehring" is sandy, and therefore unfavorable for briquetting. Since the water content of the coal amounted to 55 - 60 per cent, it was necessary to install a drainage system 5 m. under the vein (by driving galleries on) and pumping the water into a flood basin. The pumps had a capacity of approximately 12 cubic meters per minute.

LIGNITE MINE "JONNY SCHEER" (FORMERLY "GLUECK AUF") IN HOYERSWERDER

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8. Sometime in spring, 1952, [] I visited this lignite mine, which is also in the neighborhood of Senftenberg. I recall that an electrically operated bridge crane on rails with 45 m. span width was installed there (constructed in 1949 by Lauchhammer Maschinenfabrik). I also remember that the formation of the lignite field was different from the "Franz Mehring Grube". The overburden had a thickness of 4.20 m., consisting of a sand layer of 1.80 m. on top, 1.40 m. of gravel in the middle, and 1.00 m. of clay as bottom layer. Underneath was a brown-coal vein of approximately 5 m. thickness. Otherwise, working methods and equipment were the same as at the "Franz Mehring" mine.